



## ***Questions from the Parish Assemblies***

Participants from the four parish assemblies provided questions in writing as part of the meeting. Not every question can be answered in the bulletin, but commonly asked questions will be addressed to the extent possible.

### ***Will July 1st bring an end to the changes or are there more to come?***

Parishioners want to know will the priests assigned to the parish change, will the Mass schedule change, will church buildings be closed? At this point, we can only know what we know. For example, there are no plans at present to change the Mass schedule or to close any church buildings. Will that always be the case? We don't and can't know. Future changes are "contingent," which means they depend on something else. If Mass attendance increases significantly, the parish may need to add a Mass. If contributions drop precipitously, the parish may need to consider closing a building. As far as the assignment of priests and deacons, we do not anticipate any changes at this time. However, that is a decision of the diocesan bishop who must consider the availability of priests and deacons, their age, their health and so on in light of the needs of Catholics in all six counties that make up the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

### ***How do we bring back those who have fallen away?***

This question goes to the heart of *On Mission!* and the ultimate goal of the merger of parishes. This is what Pope Saint John Paul II called the "New Evangelization." It has three elements:

1. Deepening and renewing each person's relationship with Jesus;
2. "Re-proposing" the Gospel to those who have, for whatever reason, experienced a crisis of faith which has led them to leave the practice of their faith; and
3. Announcing the Gospel to those who have never effectively heard it.

Pope Francis has proposed that the steps to accomplishing this include:

- ◆ Welcoming all as brother or sister.
- ◆ Accompanying, which is walking with people in their faith journey without judgment or condemnation, confident of God's mercy.

- ◆ Integrating by joining people more fully over time into the Church's life of faith and worship.

So we must begin by welcoming. That happens at all levels of the parish—in our worship, in our programs and events, in our organizations and ministries and especially one-on-one. No one is exempt from this call to the New Evangelization. When it comes to welcoming, accompanying and integrating, the oft quoted saying is applicable: "If not me, then who? If not now, then when?"

### ***What will happen to the funds collected for the Campaign for the Church Alive!***

Campaign funds are restricted funds. That means that they cannot be re-directed without review and approval on both the parish and diocesan levels for a purpose other than those contained in the case statements of the four parishes. But we must be realistic here. The case statements were prepared and approved under very different circumstances. Those case statements must be re-evaluated in light of present day circumstances and future needs. That is particularly true in light of the potential economic impact of the coronavirus. The new parish Finance Council will be entrusted with considering both the annual financial needs of the new parish as well as its long-term capital needs. Out of this overall assessment, a re-appraisal of the original case statements will be made in light of (a) the total funds collected, (b) the funds already expended in light of the original case statements (c) the unfulfilled elements of the case statements and (d) the remaining funds. The Finance Council will, as needed, propose a revised case statement. As with the original case statement, donors will be informed of any proposed changes. After that, the pastor would have to submit any revised case statement to a diocesan board established for this purpose. If the board approves any revised case statement, only then could the remaining collected funds be re-directed and, again, restricted to the revised case statement.